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HOW OLD IS THE MISSISSIPPI?

BY FRANCIS M. FULTZ.

(Abstract)

In asking this question it is not intended to open for discussion when and how each particular part of the great river came into existence. Nor will it be expected to prove whether or not it is now everywhere following the course it first selected for itself. But the effort will be to show that its prototype must have existed at a certain fixed time in the distant geologic past. In fixing this date it must be understood that the claim is not made that the river course surely dates from that time, but that it existed at least as early as that. It may be much older, but as for that let future discovered evidence tell. That part of the Mississippi to which the evidence in question pertains, lies between the mouths of the Iowa and Des Moines rivers.

The evidence set forth goes to show that the present Mississippi drainage system existed as early as the beginning of the Upper Burlington epoch; and that, although interrupted by frequent and perhaps prolonged submergences, it nevertheless still remains practically the same.